CHAPTER 3
MOVEMENT

This chapter discusses some of the tools that antiarmor leaders exercise to command and control the movement of antiarmor units on the battlefield. The purpose of tactical movement is to move antiarmor units on the battlefield and prepare them for contact. The various techniques and formations have unique advantages and disadvantages. Some movement techniques are secure but slow, while others are fast but less secure. Some formations work well in certain types of terrain or tactical situations but are less effective in others. The commander must consider the overall movement plan (mounted and dismounted) to include where, when, and how he may transition between the two. None of the movement techniques or formations described in this chapter should be considered inflexible or immutable. The company commander must always be prepared to adapt them to the situation at hand.

3-1. MOVEMENT FUNDAMENTALS

Movement must not be confused with maneuver. Maneuver is conducted while in contact, supported by fire, to gain a position of advantage over the enemy. Tactical movement, however, is conducted in preparation for contact. At the company and platoon level there is considerable overlap between the two, and units transition from one to the other during "actions on contact." Antiarmor units must reduce their exposure to the enemy during movement. They accomplish this by use of the terrain, avoidance of possible kill zones, dispersion, reconnaissance, and the use of measures to counter enemy observation and fires.

NOTE: The antiarmor company commander in an SBCT uses these fundamentals, augmented by the capabilities of FBCB2 and his knowledge of the art of war, to produce his situational understanding.

a. **Use Terrain for Protection.** Terrain offers cover and concealment from observation and fires. Terrain driving techniques can help units use the terrain over which they move to their advantage. Drivers should avoid "skylining." They should not move directly forward from a defilade firing position, and they should cross open areas quickly.

b. **Avoid Possible Kill Zones.** Units should avoid large open areas surrounded by cover and concealment or those dominated by terrain. They watch for the presence of obstacles or any other signs of an engagement area.

c. **Dispersion.** Dispersion between vehicles and units prevents units from becoming fixed by one enemy position or weapons systems. It also prevents enemy artillery or mortar fires from suppressing the entire element.

d. **Observe.** Units assign responsibilities of observation to crews in the formation. Units scan their assigned sectors and assign internal scanning responsibilities to their crews. This observation reduces the chances of the enemy surprising the unit.

e. **Move During Limited Visibility.** Movement during darkness or other limited visibility conditions provides concealment from enemy gunners at long range.

NOTE: This chapter focuses on the movement techniques, formations, and dismounted

transition points that, in combination with available FBCB2 technology, provide the company commander with options for moving his unit.

f. **Use Countermeasures.** Units increase their survivability by using countermeasures such as suppressive fires, smoke, and camouflage.

(1) ***Suppressive Fires.*** The antiarmor platoon uses direct and indirect fires to suppress enemy positions. Direct fire is the most responsive means of suppressing enemy weapons systems. Its effectiveness, however, varies according to the weapon being used to provide suppression. The TOW, while the most lethal choice against enemy armor, has a slow rate of fire. The MK19 and M2 (cal. 50 MG) can effectively suppress enemy positions out to 3,000 meters. The combination of TOW, MK19, and M2 may provide the best balance in unclear situations. The most effective means of suppression is indirect fire. Indirect fire can suppress enemy positions at greater ranges and is effective when the enemy is using masking terrain as protection. The battalion's organic mortars are the most responsive indirect fire assets available to antiarmor units in light, airborne, and air assault battalions.

(2) ***Smoke.*** Artillery, the maneuver battalion's organic mortars, smoke pots, and light vehicle obscuration smoke system (LVOSS) provide obscuration in support of maneuvering antiarmor units. The smoke denies the enemy's ability to observe and effectively target the antiarmor unit. Another benefit is the ability of the TOW thermal sight to see and acquire enemy targets through the smoke while concealed. The new thermal weapons sight for the MK19 and M2 make these weapons systems more effective when operating in smoke.

(3) ***Camouflage.*** Properly selected camouflage patterns and the masking of objects that shine complicate the enemy's ability to detect targets. Leaders take precautions to ensure windshields, mirrors, headlights, and other reflective surfaces do not compromise the vehicle's position at long range. For example, use tape or burlap sandbags to cover reflective surfaces or, when appropriate, remove those items not needed in a tactical environment.

3-2. MOVEMENT FORMATIONS

Formations are arrangements of elements, vehicles, and soldiers in relation to one another. Formations are not rigid, and the distances between vehicles, shape, and speed of the formation are determined by the factors of METT-TC. Each vehicle in the formation scans an assigned sector to ensure all-round security while moving. Antiarmor units use formation to--

- Establish the relationship of one subordinate unit to another on the ground.
- Allow the unit to position firepower where it is needed in support of a direct fire plan (see Appendix C, Direct Fire Planning and Control).
- Establish responsibilities for sector security among subordinate units.
- Facilitate the execution of battle drills and directed COAs.

a. **Column.** The column formation (Figure 3-1) is used when speed is critical, when the unit is moving through restricted terrain on a specific route, and when enemy contact is unlikely. Each subordinate unit follows directly behind the one in front of it. If the situation dictates, vehicles can disperse laterally to enhance security. The column formation has the following characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, and limitations:

- It is the easiest formation to control.

- It provides good security by maximizing firepower to the flanks.
- It permits rapid transition into other combat formations.
- It focuses on speed.
- It masks direct fires to the front.
- It provides limited overall security.

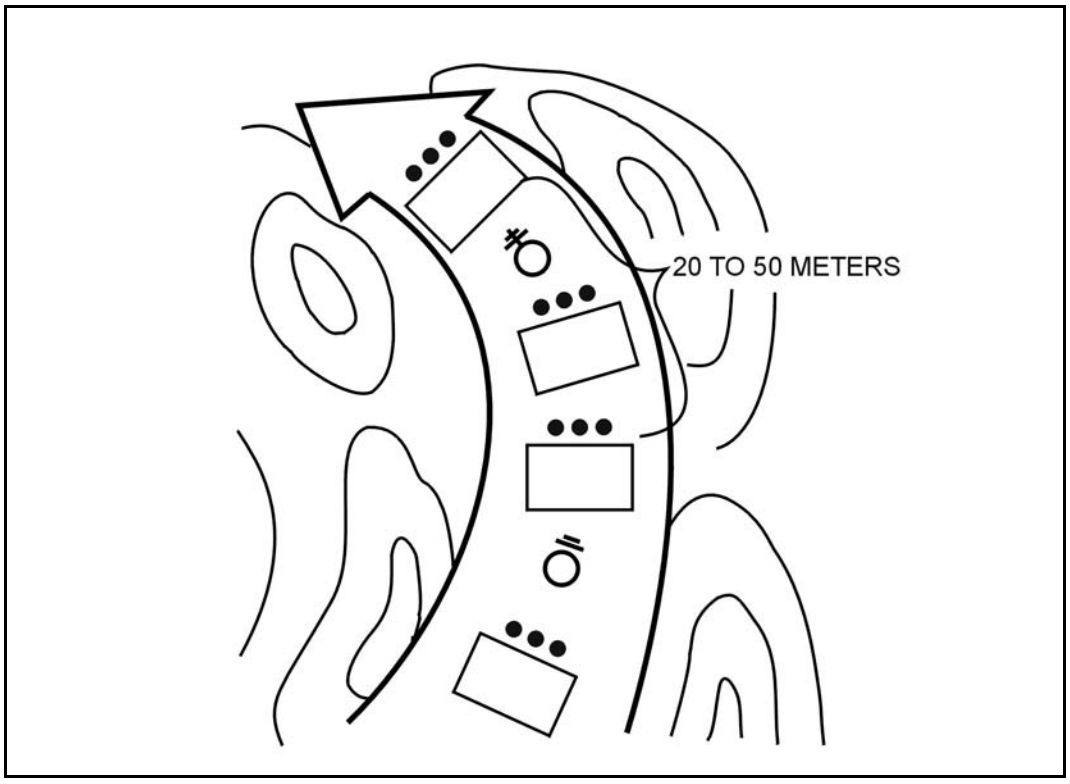

Figure 3-1. Column formation.

b. **Line.** The line formation (Figure 3-2, page 3-4) is used when a unit is crossing large open areas or needs to maximize firepower to the front. In the company line formation, platoons move abreast of one another and are dispersed laterally. The line formation has the following characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, and limitations:

- It provides maximum firepower to the front and rear, but minimum firepower to the flanks.
- It is difficult to control.
- It is less secure than other formations because it lacks depth.
- It is the most difficult formation from which to transition to other formations.

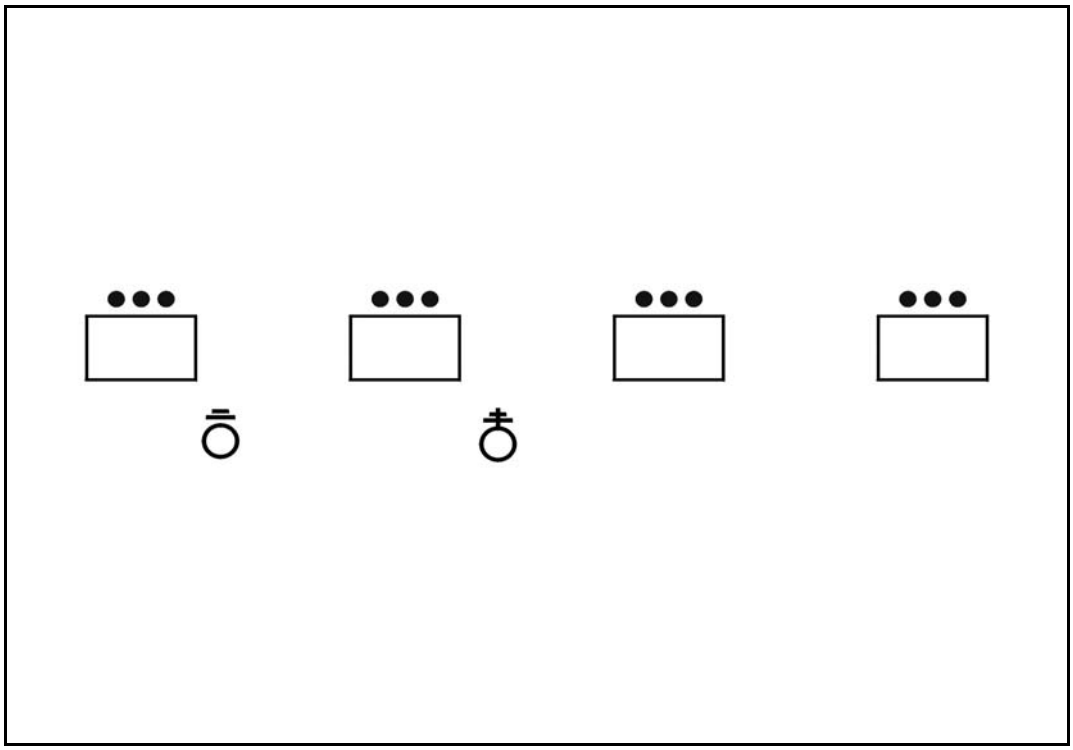

Figure 3-2. Line formation.

c. **Echelon.** The echelon formation (Figure 3-3) is used when the unit wants to maintain security or observation of one flank and enemy contact is unlikely. In the company echelon formation (left or right), the lead platoon positions farthest from the echeloned flank, with each subsequent platoon located to the rear of and outside the platoon in front of it. The echelon formation has the following characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, and limitations:

- It provides excellent security to the higher formation in the direction of the echelon.
- It allows for quick deployment in the direction of the echelon.
- If is difficult to control, especially in restrictive terrain.

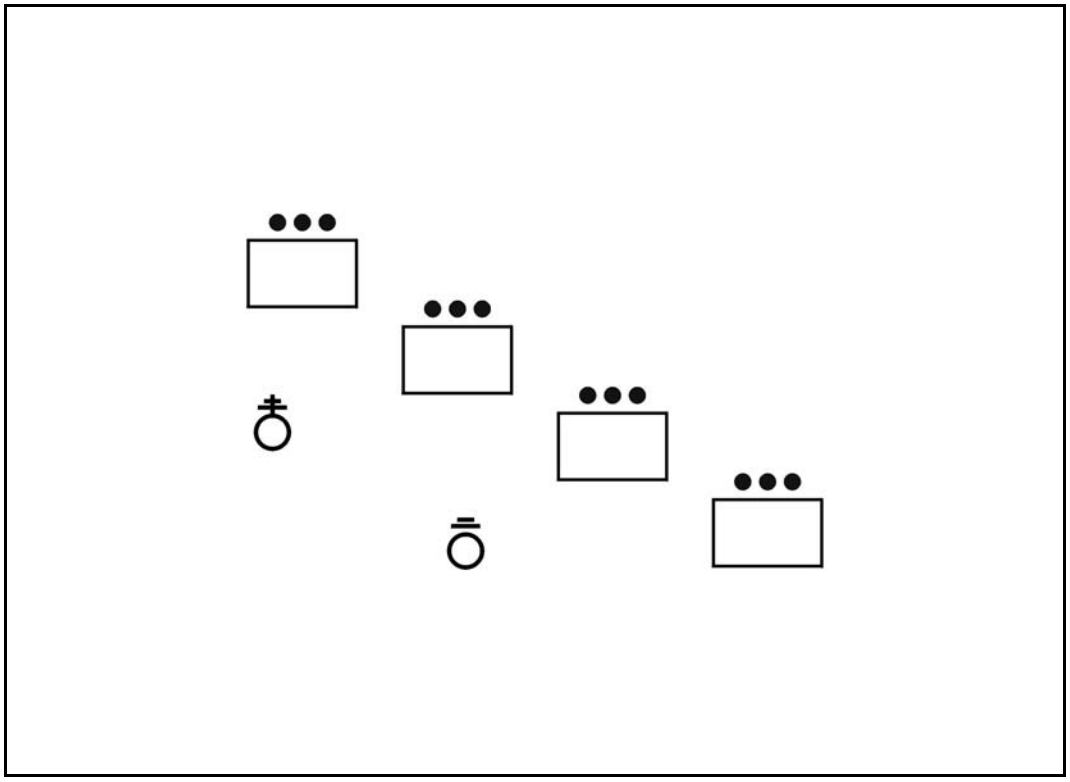

Figure 3-3. Echelon formation.

d. **Wedge.** The wedge formation (Figure 3-4, page 3-6) is used when the enemy situation is vague or contact is possible. In the company wedge, the lead platoon is in the center of the formation with the remaining platoons located to the rear of and outside the lead platoon. The wedge formation has the following characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, and limitations:

- It provides excellent firepower to the front while still maintaining good firepower to the flanks.
- It is easy to control.
- It provides good flank security.
- It can be used with all of the movement techniques.

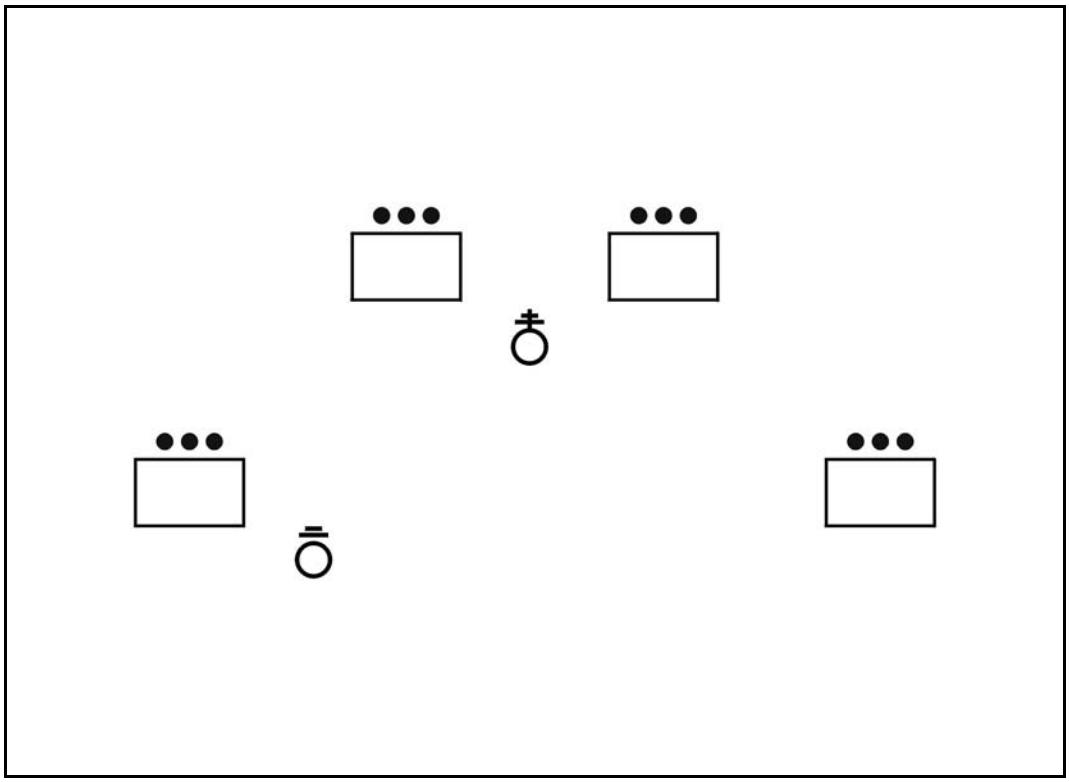

Figure 3-4. Wedge formation.

e. **Vee.** The vee formation (Figure 3-5) is used when enemy contact is possible. In the company vee, the center platoon is located at the rear of the formation, while the remaining platoons are located to the front of and outside the center platoon. The vee formation has the following characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, and limitations:

- It provides more firepower to the front than the wedge formation while still maintaining good firepower to the flanks.
- It allows one subordinate unit in the formation to maintain flexibility when contact occurs.
- It facilitates rapid deployment into other formations.
- It can be used with all of the movement techniques.
- It is more difficult to control than the wedge formation. It is difficult for individual vehicles to maintain proper orientation.

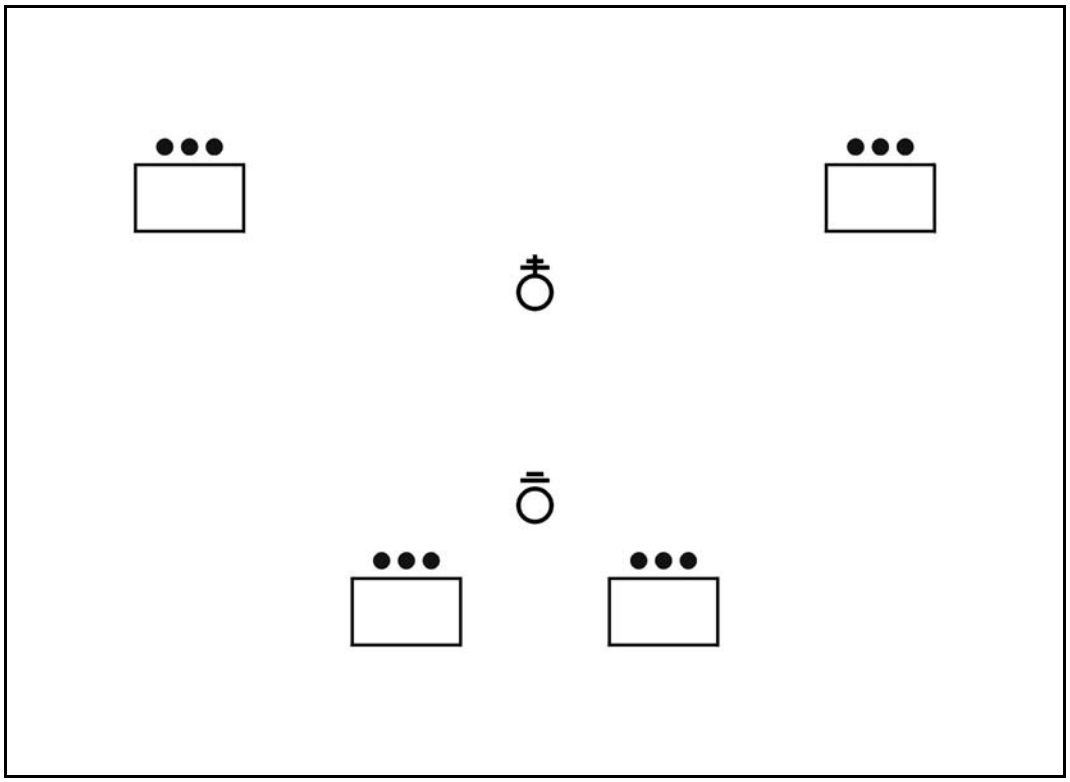

Figure 3-5. Vee formation.

f. **Coil and Herringbone.** The coil (Figure 3-6, page 3-8) and herringbone (Figure 3-7, page 3-8) are platoon-level formations employed when elements of the company are stationary and must maintain all around security.

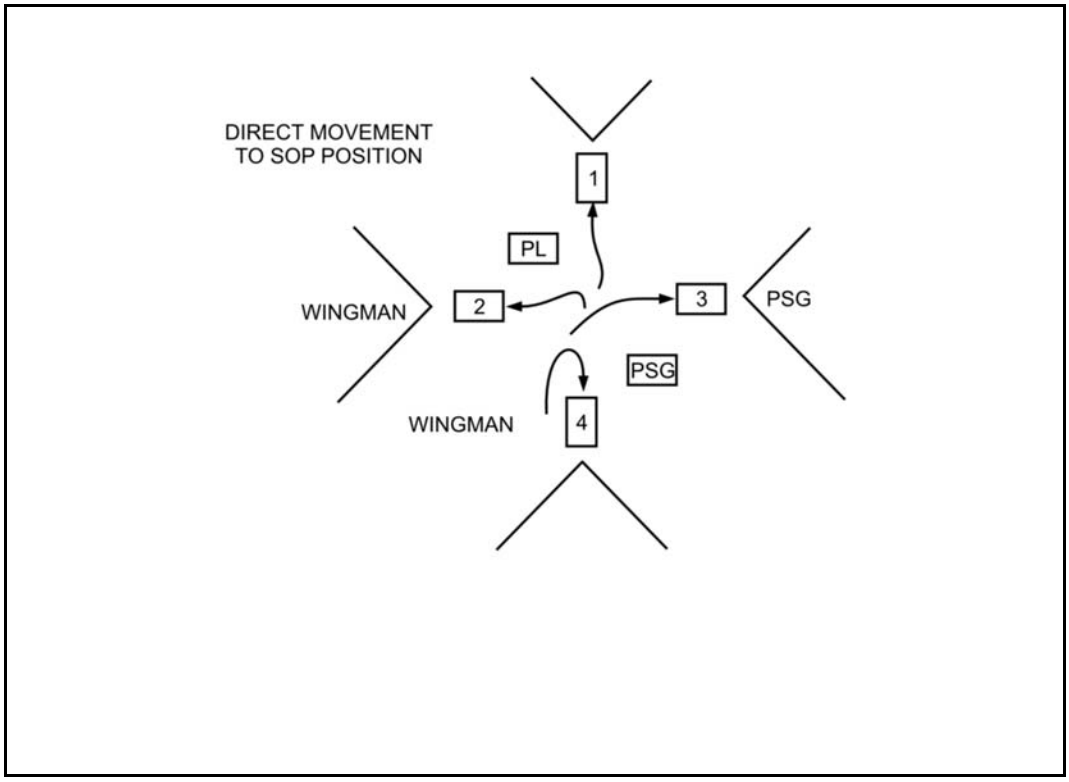

Figure 3-6. Coil formation

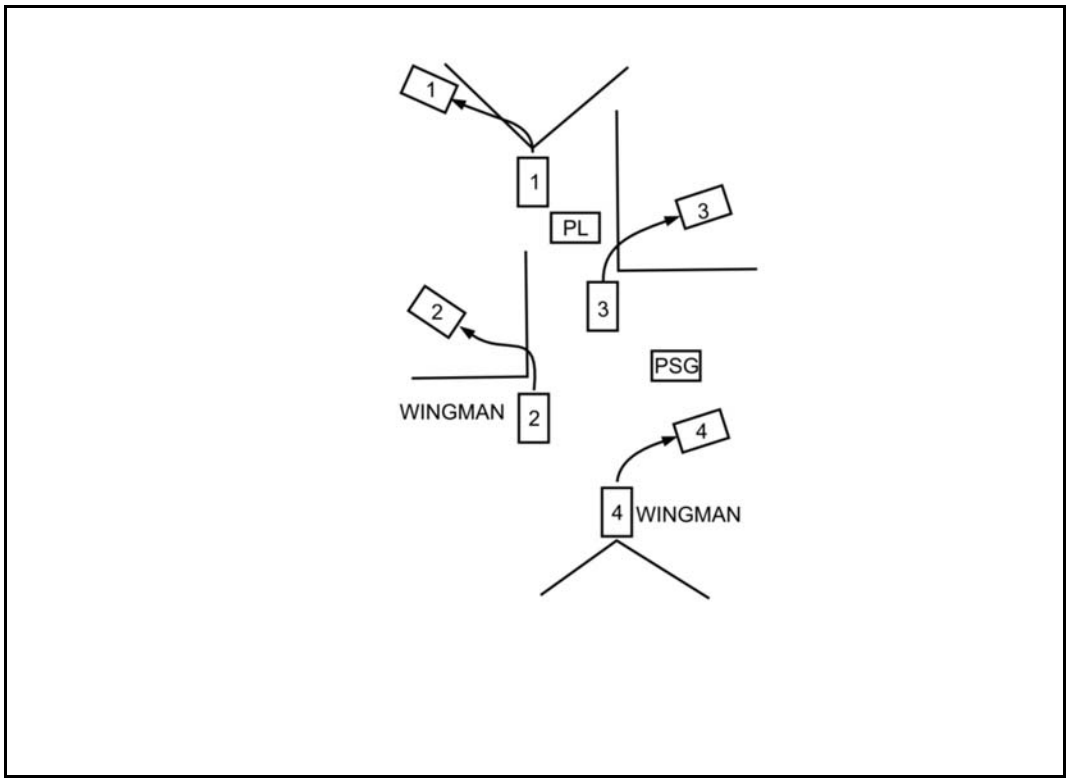

Figure 3-7. Herringbone formation.

3-3. MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES

A movement technique is the manner in which a unit traverses terrain, and it is determined by the likelihood of enemy contact. Antiarmor companies and platoons use the same basic movement techniques used by all ground maneuver units: traveling, traveling overwatch, and bounding overwatch. The antiarmor leader's detailed analysis of the factors of METT-TC (specifically the type of enemy contact expected, the availability of an overwatch element, the terrain over which the moving element will pass, and the balance of speed and security) dictates the movement technique employed.

a. **Traveling.** Continuous movement of all of the unit's elements characterizes the traveling movement technique (Figure 3-8). It is used when enemy contact is unlikely and speed is important.

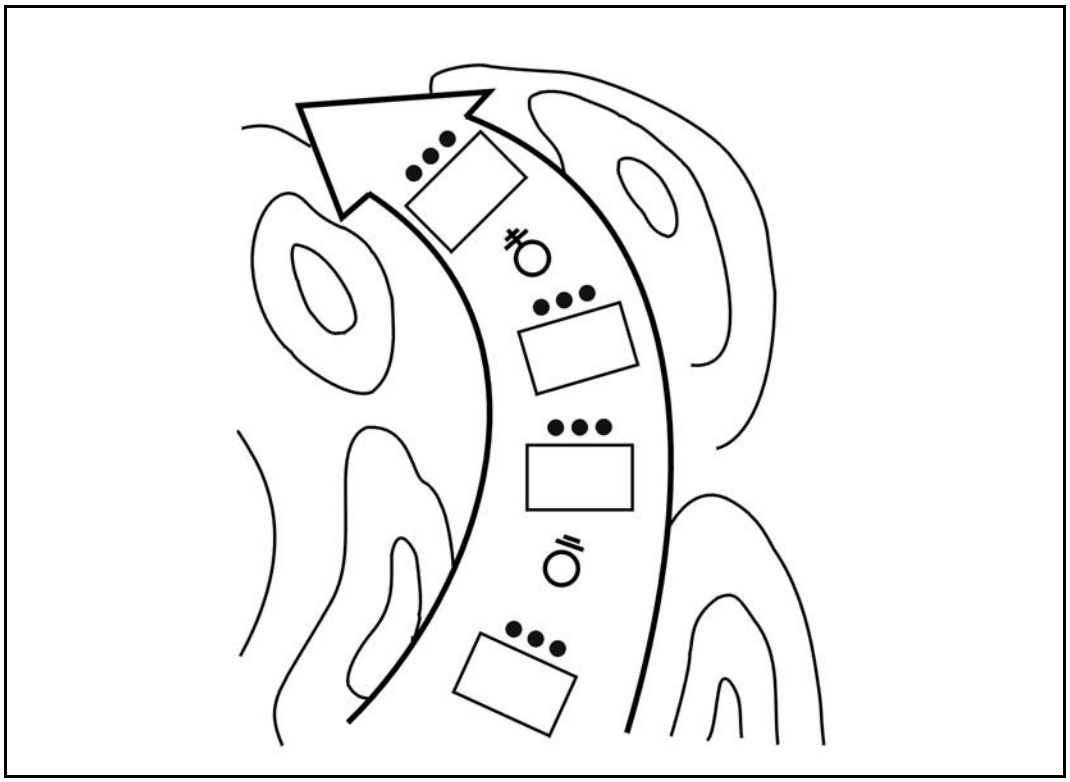

Figure 3-8. Traveling technique.

b. **Traveling Overwatch.** The traveling overwatch technique (Figure 3-9, page 3-10) is an extended form of the traveling technique that provides additional security when speed is desirable but enemy contact is possible. The lead element moves continuously. The trail element moves at various speeds and may halt periodically to overwatch the lead element's movement. The dispersion between the lead and trail elements must be based on the trail element's ability to provide immediate suppressive fires in case the lead element is engaged. The intent of the traveling overwatch technique is to maintain depth, provide flexibility, and maintain the ability to maneuver even if contact occurs.

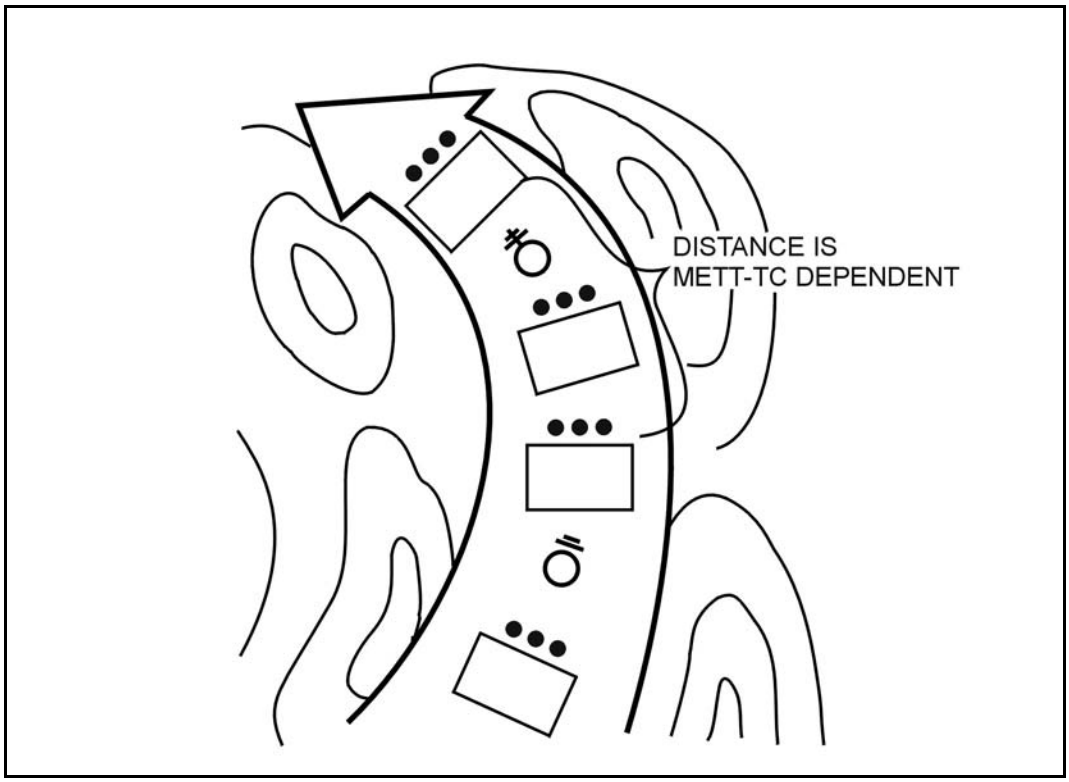

Figure 3-9. Traveling overwatch.

c. **Bounding Overwatch.** The bounding overwatch technique (Figure 3-10) is used when enemy contact is expected. The intent of this technique is for the unit to deploy prior to contact, giving it the ability to protect the bounding element by immediately suppressing an enemy force. When using the bounding overwatch technique, the overwatch element is assigned sectors to scan (see Appendix C, Direct Fire Planning and Control) while the bounding element moves. The bounding element should avoid masking the direct fires of the overwatch element, and it must not move beyond the effective supporting range of the overwatch element. Antiarmor units employ either of the two bounding methods: alternate bounds and successive bounds.

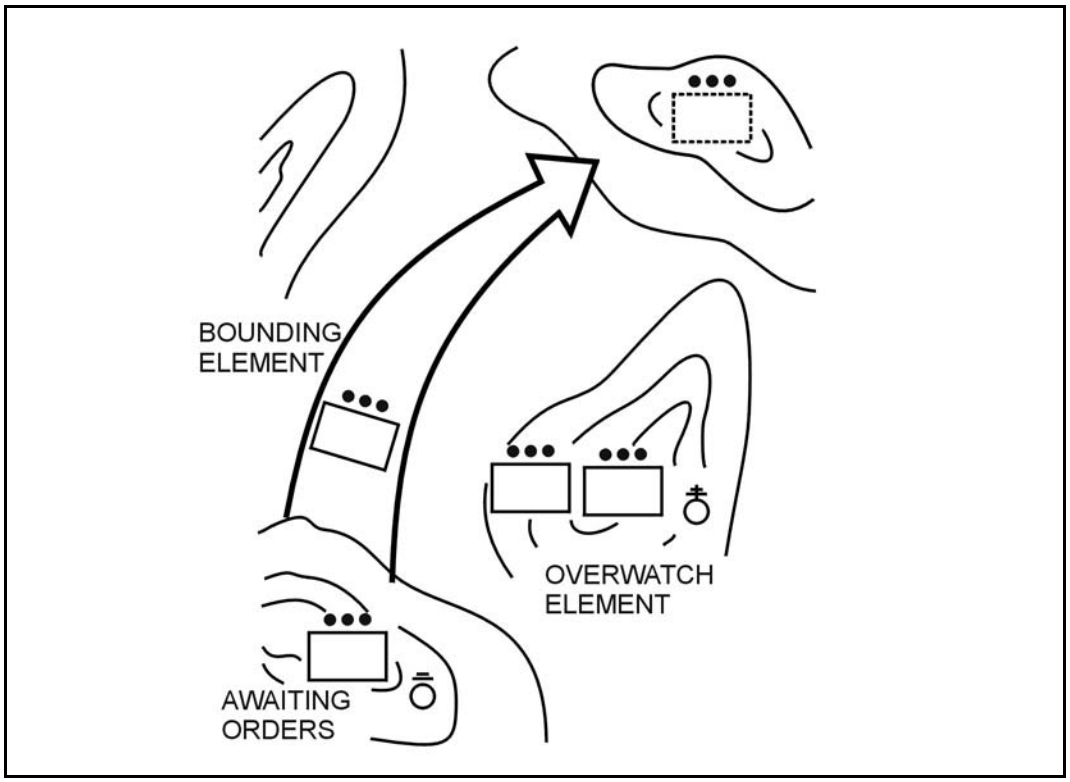

Figure 3-10. Bounding overwatch.

(1) ***Alternate Bounds.*** Covered by the trail element, the lead element moves forward, halts, and assumes an overwatch position. The trail element then advances past the lead element to assume an overwatch position. This sequence continues as necessary with only one element moving at a time. Alternate bounding is the more rapid of the two methods.

(2) ***Successive Bounds.*** The lead element, covered by the trail element, moves forward, halts, and assumes an overwatch position. The trail element then advances to an overwatch position that is roughly abreast of the lead element's position. The lead element then advances to the next position. This sequence continues as necessary with only one element moving at a time. The trail element avoids advancing past the lead element. Successive bounding is the more secure and easier to control of the two methods; however, it is much more deliberate and slower than alternate bounding.